GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3522
ANSWERED ON:07.08.2002
TRAVEL AGENTS
SULTAN SALAHUDDIN OWAISI

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether w.e.f. August 1, 2000, the Government authorised the travel agents to submit passport application forms to passport offices;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the number of such travel agents in the country at present;

(d) whether a large number of travel agents submitted forged documents to obtain passports;

(e) if so, the number of such complaints received by the Government since August, 2000;

(f) whether the Government have established any foolproof system to scrutinize the application forms for passport submitted by such agents; and

g) if so, the details thereof?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH)

a) Yes, sir.

b) As per fresh guidelines issued on August 01, 2000, the following travel agents are allowed to submit passport application forms to the Passport Offices :-

i. those travel agents who were granted recognition by this Ministry between 1986 and 23.7.1992, and

ii. those travel agents who are members of either Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI) or Travel Agents Federation of India (TAFI) and have been granted recognition by International Air Transport Association (IATA).

c) At present 1188 travel agents are authorized to submit passport application forms to passport offices.

d) Yes, sir.

e) 105 complaints since August, 2000 have been received by the Government.

f) Yes, sir.

g) The travel agents have been allowed to accept and submit passport application forms to the different passport offices subject to the following conditions :-

i. The application forms and original documents are to be checked thoroughly by these travel agents

ii. The travel agents would be required to assist the applicant to complete application form correctly for which the Ministry would provide a check list to them.

iii. The travel agents would be permitted to submit passport application forms with a proper authority letter and would also be required to bring the original documents for verification to the Regional Passport Offices (RPOs)/Passport Offices(POs).

iv. Passports for first time applicants would be delivered by registered post or to applicant only. Passports for miscellaneous services and passports in lieu of expired passport could be delivered to the travel agents with a proper authority letter.

v. In case any travel agent dealing with the passport office is found to be engaged in any malpractices, his permission to deal with the Passport Office is withdrawn immediately. Cases of criminal nature are also referred to the police.

vi. On applications received from the travel agents, passport offices issue a passport only after a clear police verification report.